

Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

References:

- 1) 1. Corinthians 13:8-12
- 2) Peter 1:12
- 3) John 17:17
- 4) John 4:23-24

New Testament Principles - 1

In the Bible there is one letter written by one of Jesus' younger brothers. His name was Jude, meaning "praised." He humbly referred to himself as a bonded servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,

Jude wrote in earnest about our mutual salvation, urging Christians to "earnestly contend for the faith which was **once** delivered to the saints."(v.3)

In it he does not introduce any new teaching. The whole purpose of his letter is to guard us against being subtly misled by new doctrines.

So this letter must have been the last New Testament document to have been written.

As with the Jews, Malachi was considered to be "the seal of the prophets". So with us the epistle of Jude might be considered to be the seal of the New Testament prophets.

Up until then divine revelation was given here a little, there a little. Finally, with Jude's epistle, the complete revelation replaced that which was "in part." ⁽¹⁾

In a similar way, Peter urged his readers to "be established in the present truth." ⁽²⁾ Any doctrine and form of worship not authorised in the New Testament cannot be true. Years ago, a beloved elder brother used to say: "If it is new, it cannot be true." So we must turn to God's word. "His word is truth." ⁽³⁾

God seeks folk who will worship Him "in Spirit and In truth." Do you want to be the kind of person that God is looking for-"a true worshipper"? ⁽⁴⁾

The Value of the CHURCH

Derek L Daniell, Tunbridge Wells.

For most people attending a church service is at best a rare occasion. Weddings, funerals and man made religious festivals like Easter and Christmas are about the only time most people will enter a church building. Many will say that the church is irrelevant and outdated in our modern world, and that the church has no place in their daily life, but why is this so? Mankind has the desire to worship something or someone, but rejects the God who created them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been made, so that they are WITHOUT EXCUSE. Because even though they know God, **they did not honour Him as God or give thanks**, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. [Romans 1:20-23; cp. Acts 14:15-18]

Worshipping a God we Know

When the apostle Paul arrived in the city of Athens he said the citizens were **“very religious”** as he saw their many idols. However, on seeing an altar inscribed TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. He took the opportunity to make God known to them. In his speech to the assembled philosophers he told them that God **“does not dwell in temples made with hands”**. Neither was God **“like gold, silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man”**. In reality **“in Him we live and move and exist ... for we also are His children”**, therefore this **“unknown God”** is the ONLY one man is to worship. Acts 17:16-34. The nation of Israel had a covenant with God in which they were commanded to worship ONLY Him.

They were not to make themselves idols to worship or serve, (Deuteronomy 55:1-10; cp Matthew 22:34-40). Under the New Covenant we are to worship and serve the same God and it is the **privilege of Christians** to assemble with others of like faith to do this, (Hebrews 10:19-25). The church that Jesus is building consists of local congregations of disciples of Jesus Christ who are:

... living stones, being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [1 Peter 2:5]

The Value of the church to You

It is through **the church** that God has made known His manifold wisdom,

... through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the **eternal purpose** that he has realised in Jesus Christ our Lord. [Ephesians. 3:10-11]

The church that Jesus established was purchased by His blood, (Acts 20:28)

The church is His sanctified bride,

So that he (*Christ*) might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." [Ephesians 5:26-27]

We need to understand how valuable the church is to God, to understand how valuable the church is for us if we are to be acceptable before God. An anonymous poet wrote these words:

No place there is on earth more sweet,
more rich with pure delight,
Than where our Father's children meet
to worship Him aright.

With saints on earth to sing His praise,
inspired with holy zeal;

With joy the note of song we'll raise
as we His presence feel.

Who can forsake assembling here,
while grace and truth declare
Where we in Jesus' name appear
His presence shall be there.

If earth affords a joy so dear,
where partings oft are known,
What heights of rapture shall appear
forever near God's throne.

The Apostle Andrew

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron, GA

Over the last several months, I've been writing about Jesus' twelve apostles. So far, we've studied Thaddeus (Sept 2011), Simon the Zealot (March 2012), Nathanael (June 2012), James the Less (September 2012), Matthew (December 2012), Thomas (March 2013), and Philip (June 2013). This month, we'll examine the life of the apostle Andrew.

Andrew lived with his brother Simon (later named Peter) in Bethsaida (Mark 1:29, John 1:44). They had a fishing business together on the sea of Galilee. Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist, and personally heard John proclaim Jesus as "the Lamb of God." At this point, Andrew began to follow Jesus. (John 1:35-40)

Andrew was overjoyed that he had met the Messiah! He quickly found his older brother Peter and told him the good news.

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first finds his own brother Simon, and says to him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. [John 1:40-42a]

From this point on, Andrew was to bring many people to Jesus.

Although his job had been that of a fisherman, Jesus now called him to be a "fisher of men."

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightaway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

[Mark 1:16-18, cf. Matthew 4:18]

Andrew did become an effective "fisher of men," bringing many people to Jesus. John chapter six tells about a time when Jesus wanted to feed a great crowd that had gathered. Andrew let Jesus know about a boy who had offered to give his lunch of five barley loaves and two small fish. Through this gift, Jesus miraculously fed the whole crowd, with twelve baskets left over. Because Andrew was willing to bring this lad to Jesus, many people were able to witness the power of God. (John 6:1-14)

Andrew also brought some Greeks to Jesus. This occurred in Jerusalem just a few days before Jesus' crucifixion.

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip comes and tells Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. [John 12:20-23].

Although Andrew was one of Jesus' first followers, Andrew's brother Peter became more prominent. Andrew is often referred to as "Simon Peter's brother." (Matthew 4:18, 10:2, Mark 1:16, Luke 6:14, John 1:40, 6:8). Sometimes Jesus spent time with only the twelve, and at other special times only Peter, James, and John were present. These three were the apostles nearest to Jesus during the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-2, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28-29), the raising of Jairus' daughter, (Mark 5:37, Luke 8:51) and Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-37, Mark 14:32-33).

However, there is a time recorded when Andrew was also included in a small gathering of Jesus and these three.

During his final week in Jerusalem, Jesus had gone out of the city and was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple. Earlier, when his disciples had commented on the magnificence of the temple, Jesus had told them, "Do you see these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mark 13:1-2). The disciples were surprised by this distressing prophecy. Later, Andrew and the three wanted to find out when this would occur.

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

[Mark 13:3-4]

Because he made time to seek out Jesus and ask him these questions, Andrew learned much about the coming troubles, while being reassured of God's deliverance. (Mark 13:5-37)

The name Andrew means "manly." Andrew showed true manliness by his dedicated, humble service to others. Through the life of the apostle Andrew, may we be encouraged to bring people to Jesus. Like Andrew, let's not worry about how prominent we are, but instead let us work faithfully for people's salvation and God's glory.

Strength in Weakness

Colin Hilton - Hindley

A paradox is described in the dictionary as:

"an assertion seemingly self-contradictory which nevertheless may be true to fact".

"Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it," (Matthew 16:25) reminds us that there are endless paradoxes in life.

Paradox no.1

**We are weakest where we are strongest,
and strongest where we are weakest.**

"When I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10)

Let me give you a little illustration!--Two men; one middle aged and the other a few years younger.

The middle aged man was being repeatedly urged to have just one "sociable" glass of beer. He adamantly refused. He said that his parents were horrible drunkards, and they had passed the craving on to him. He said, "I know it's in my system, so I'll never take that "first drink".

He had set his guard at his weakest point.

The younger man had been brought up by godly parents, and in his youth had been induced to drink some whisky, and ended up being one of the most pitiable down and outs on the streets.

After a few years of wretchedness he found salvation in Christ, and later wrote his life-story.

He had taken that first drink with the thought that there were no drunkards in his family, so he wouldn't come to any harm.

It was his strongest point, so he didn't place any guard there. He was weakest where he was strongest.

The same thing is especially true in the Christian life!

When we are living in entire dependence upon Christ we are strongest where we are weakest, because, at our weakest point, the strength of Christ has its fullest opportunity.

But when we are living the self-sufficient life, we are weakest where we are strongest, because we are then liable to surprise attack.

Paradox no.2

We climb highest when we stoop lowest.

That great big balloon of pride floats really high doesn't it; and yet, nothing is more base. On the other hand, nothing stoops so low as humility, yet nothing floats so high.

Jesus "humbled Himself- even to the death of the cross", and was lifted to the very throne of God, bearing "the name which is above every name".(Philippians 2:8,9)

What could be lowlier, or loftier, than the humility of Jesus when He knelt with basin and towel to wash His disciples' feet; or when He stooped to the depthless abasement of the cross to redeem us?

Let us learn, that the lower we are at the feet of Jesus, the higher we rise.

When we wrong someone and stoop to apologise to ask forgiveness of someone; or to put up with ill-treatment, without any resentment, we are rising to lovely heights.

If we only realize; that we "ride the high horse" of unforgiving pride, we are crawling in the dust with the serpent.

We think that humility only seems to cripple us; in reality: it gives us wings!

The way up is down! The way to the throne is the cross!

Whosoever will lose his life for Christ's sake in this world, will find it in a better one!

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty Hand of God,
that He may exalt you in due time".

(1 Peter 5:6)

Do we love Jesus?

John 14:15 If you love me observe my instructions!

John 14:23 If anyone loves me, he will observe my advice, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Martin Luther Rejected James

J. Lee Roberts. Lubbock, Texas.

Brother J. Lee wrote this letter to a friend and is copied with his permission.

Dear D...,

I deeply appreciate your love for our Saviour and His teaching! Your good studies touch on many important topics and I want to express my thanks for all your efforts. But allow me to offer the following thoughts about faith for your consideration:

By the time of Jesus Jewish traditions had made void the word of God. (Matthew 15:1-9)

Ever since Luther rejected the inspired epistle of James, because it disagreed with his own doctrine of faith only* (James 2: 14 - 26), the Protestant theologians have unintentionally made faith their saviour, when in biblical truth it is faith working in love that gives ACCESS to the Saviour and His grace, which no one can earn!! (Romans 5:2; Ephesians 3:12). This is not intentional, but still a rejection of the big picture and the biblical context. Theologians reject any mention of the obedience of faith for fear they would teach that one can EARN Salvation, which is impossible. But please consider these among other scriptures that teach that obedience from the heart is what God wants. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Romans 6:17). It is possible to obey with improper motives when one tries to promote self righteousness by perfect keeping of works of the Law Romans 10:3). No one was ever saved by works of the Law (Romans 3:20) as even the great men of the Old Testament were saved when they obeyed God's word and did what He instructed them to do. IN EVERY CASE they were saved by an obedience of faith. (Romans 1: 5; 16: 25 - 27; Hebrews 11: 8, 17; Galatians 5:6). We have ACCESS to the Saviour and His Grace through a faith working in love and obedient to Divine instructions. This is faith in action as James teaches as does ALL scripture. Those obedient to the teaching

of Jesus as it comes to us by inspiration through the apostles teaching beginning at Pentecost AFTER Christ's new covenant became valid will have access to his wonderful promises of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(Hebrews 9:15 - 22, Acts 2:30 - 43).

D..., please don't believe in me, I only want all of us to be taught of God. (John 6:45). To God alone the praise, and may He alone be our guide and not our traditions.

In Jesus,

J Lee

* Why Luther rejected James:

Martin Luther rejected the book [of James] as "a right strawy epistle", because he thought that James contradicted Saint Paul's view of justification by faith alone. [Douglas Ezell]

<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txs/james.htm>.

Finding Security

Luke 12:13-34

Ricci Gambino - Birmingham

A man interrupted Jesus while he was teaching. The man was having an argument with his brother about money - a family inheritance. He wanted Jesus to tell his brother to split the inheritance with him. Jesus refused to get involved in the argument. Instead, he told the parable of the Rich Fool.

And one of the company said to him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divides the inheritance with me. Then He said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

Then He said to them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: because a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. So He spoke a parable to them, saying:

A certain rich man's land produced abundant crops and he reasoned within himself, saying, "What shall I do, because I have no room in which to put my produce?" Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will demolish my barns and build bigger ones and that is where I will store all my produce and my goods. Then I will say to my soul, Soul, thou have much goods laid up for many years, take it easy, eat, drink and be merry."

But God said to him, "Stupid *man*, this night your soul is required from you. Now who will get all the riches you have stored up for yourself?"

So it is with him who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. [Luke 12:13-21]

The Rich Fool had a good year. His crop was bigger than he needed. He decided to tear down his barn and build a bigger one so that he could store it all. Then he would never have to worry about anything again. But that very night, God told him his time was up:

Foolish *man*! This very night your soul is required from you. Now who will get all the riches you have stored up for yourself? [Luke 12:20]

It's easy to look at the Rich Fool as being greedy. But his problem was deeper than that. He was a man who wanted **security**. He wanted to feel sure that no matter what happened, he was going to be OK.

The point of Jesus' parable was that **there aren't any guarantees like that** in material possessions. None of us can be sure that we'll wake up tomorrow! Any wealth or material possessions we've accumulated can disappear overnight.

Jesus said that only God can give us a real guarantee of security.

Whatever happens to us in this life, He will be with us, and we can be sure that we will be with Him forever. If our relationship with God is healthy, other needs will be taken care of, as well.

We look around today and we see too many people playing the lottery, betting on horses and such like, all trying to gain material money to have security. But what happens when all that money has gone? What then?

When you place your trust and security in things that you can touch and see, it has a habit of letting you down.

Jesus said:

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

[Luke 12:34]

We show what's **important** to us by what we do. So **where is your treasure?** What are **you** counting on for your security? Jesus says that there is only one thing that we can really count on, and that is our **relationship with God through him:**

Jesus said to him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me.** [John 14:6].

If our relationship with him is right, then the other priorities in our lives will be right, too.

You can't take this earthly security with you when you die.

If you want daily and eternal security you need to know Jesus.

What happens when you only rely on money and possessions to make you happy? All that can go if you lost your job backed the wrong horse.

There is nothing wrong, let me add in having possessions, it's when those possessions become all you live for.

Consider Dorcas:

(When Peter was in Lydda) there was in Joppa a special female disciple, named Tabitha, which interpreted, means Doe, this woman was full of good works and kind acts which she did all the time. ... However she became ill and died ... Lydda being near Joppa, the disciples ... sent two men to him, appealing to him to come to them without delay.

When Peter arrived ... all the widows stood around him weeping, showing coats and clothes that Dorcas was making while she was with them. [Acts 9:36-39].

I recently took a funeral and in my address I said this:

"What will I leave behind at my death?"

We will leave behind every worldly possession.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we will carry nothing out [1 Timothy 6:6-10].

Since we can take nothing with us, why should we get so wrapped up with "things"? The Lord Jesus says:

For what is a man profited, if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" [Matthew 16:24-26].

If you gained the whole world for your own, you would really have nothing of any value in eternity.

Please think about long lasting security that will not only make you happy here, knowing that you have that, but having it in the life to come.

What is the Work of the Church in the World?

James Neil - Skelmersdale

As with any question concerning Christian doctrine, We should ensure that we teach and follow the word of scripture. I would like to give some scriptural references which have to do with various aspects of this question of the work of the church in the world because of the nature of the question. It would be foolish of me to even pretend to cover its every aspect but I hope that this article will give food for thought.

Firstly, it is made clear that everything which is done

should be done to the glory of God.

To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. [Romans 16:27]

To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. [Jude 1:25]

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. [Acts 6:4]

These verses and many more throughout the scriptures, make it absolutely clear that whatever work the church does, is done to the glory of God.

What though, should these works consist of?

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. [Hebrews 13:15]

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. [2 Timothy 4:2]

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

[JUDE 1: 21]

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

[Acts 6:3]

This last quotation had to do a problem arising in the ministration of benevolence towards those in need.

We are inundated with various charities asking us to make donations to the work they are doing should we as the church respond to these cries for help?

We have a number of options, we can for example

respond by simply making the donation asked for,
Or...we may feel that the church should not work with these organisations but rather “Go it alone”,
Or ... should the church not involve itself at all in benevolent work which may be viewed as “Secular” work and stick to spreading the Gospel perhaps even to the extent of refusing this kind of help to the Brethren?

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good **to all men**, especially to those who are of the household of faith. [Galatians 6: 10]

See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and **to all men**. [1 Thessalonians 5:15]

Whilst by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men. [2 Corinthians 9 : 13]

These are not all of the things which we could put under the heading of this article but for each thing I have quoted chapter and verse. I assure you, you will find other references.

Should the church seek to bring glory to God's name?

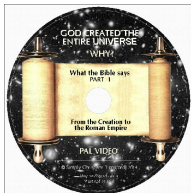
Should all majesty, dominion and power be accorded to Him?

Should we praise Him continually?

Should both prayer and ministry be part of the work of the church?

Colossians 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

NEWS and INFORMATION



By now UK churches of Christ should have received two disks entitled: WHY GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE? One is a PAL video. The other has editable pdf and odt presentation files. If your congregation has not received them, please e-mail me your church's postal address: AshurstA@aol.com.

EASTWOOD, Nottinghamshire.

Seymour Road, NG9 7EB

Saturdays

6.00 pm Refreshments

7.00 pm Message

May 10

August 9

November 8

Speakers to be confirmed.

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Adrian Limb Tel. 01773-761 670
cofcastwood@aol.com

STRETFORD, MANCHESTER.

Saturday Gospel Meetings

7.00 pm The Green Hut

538 Kings Road, M32 8JT

March 22nd. Graeme Morrison

September 20th.

October 18th.

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